



**Policy and Performance  
Department**

**SERVICE PLAN**

**April 2009 to March 2012**

**DRAFT RM-MF 18<sup>TH</sup> December 2008**

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### *Appendices*

*1.0 Corporate Priorities and Key Areas of Focus*

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

To meet Halton's most pressing needs, the Borough Council has identified [6 key priorities](#), and a number of associated key Areas of Focus, which, as detailed within the Council's Corporate Plan, are: -

- **A Healthy Halton**
- **Halton's Urban Renewal**
- **Halton's Children & Young People**
- **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**
- **A Safer Halton**
- **Corporate Effectiveness & Business Efficiency**

Departmental Service Plans form an integral part of the authority's corporate planning framework, as illustrated within the diagram opposite.

This framework ensures that the Council's operational activities are complementary to the delivery of its community aspirations and legal and statutory responsibilities.



Departmental Service Plans are primary documents that communicate:

- The existing and future influences that have informed the shaping of service delivery in the medium term.
- The existing and projected resources that are, or may, be required to deliver services.
- Departmental Service Objectives and Key Milestones that are to be delivered over the next three years.
- Those national and local performance indicators for which the department has a responsibility to report.

Such plans, and the Quarterly Service Plan Monitoring Reports that flow from them, are an essential tool in enabling the public, Elected Members, Senior Management, and staff how well Council departments are performing and what progress is being made in relation to improving the quality of life within the borough and service provision for local people, businesses and service users.

The Strategic Priority and associated Areas of Focus that have been most influential in the development of the service plan are

Strategic Priority 6:

### **Corporate Effectiveness and Efficient Service Delivery**

*Area of Focus 31*

***Working with partners and the community to ensure that our priorities, objectives and targets are evidence based, regularly monitored and reviewed and that there are plausible delivery plans to improve the quality of life in Halton and to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the rest of Halton.***

*Area of Focus 32*

***Building on our customer focus by improving communication, involving more service users in the design and delivery of services, and ensuring equality of access to services.***

*Area of Focus 33*

***Ensuring that we are properly structured, organised and fit for purpose and that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advice and information***

*Area of Focus 34*

***Attracting and managing financial resources effectively, maintaining transparency, financial probity and prudence, and accountability, to our stakeholders.***

## **2.0 SERVICE PROFILE**

### **2.1 Purpose**

The Policy and Performance Department exists to provide effective support for Elected Members, Senior Officers and Management Team and all Directorates, providing community leadership and providing for the well being of those who live and work within the borough.

The service enables the formulation and review of joined-up policies by providing intelligence on current conditions and future trends and developments and by integrating policy and resource planning and performance review.

In supporting strategic leadership the service can build and support partnerships and provide a key link to central government, and its agencies, and other stakeholders that will support the Council's ambitions to make Halton a thriving and vibrant borough.

In undertaking these roles the Department

- Supports and enables the Council and its partners to develop and implement policies and actions, at neighbourhood, borough, sub-regional and regional levels, which focus on the current and future challenges that the borough faces and to help to achieve the long-term aspiration of Halton as a place which is vibrant and thriving.
- Supports and co-ordinates all aspects of service performance and improvement through corporate planning, performance monitoring and review processes to enable the Council to achieve continuous improvement in all its priority service areas.
- Through a mix of consultation, engagement and exchange promotes and facilitates a two-way flow of information between the Council and its stakeholders i.e. its staff, local residents, businesses voluntary organisations, and other agencies in Halton.
- Supports policy development and planning through the provision of statistical analysis, information and surveys and co-ordinates and develops town-twinning activities.
- Advises on the identification of risks to the delivery of the Council's strategies and other key objectives (Strategic Risk Management) and on all matters relating to Operational Risk Management, Business Continuity, Health and Safety, and Emergency Planning in partnership with central and regional government departments and emergency services, and provides a 24 hour emergency planning service.

- Promotes and co-ordinates external partnership working at sub-regional, national and European levels. It maximises external funding opportunities and manages funding programmes for which the Council is the administrative body (for example European Budget Programmes).
- Hosts the Halton Strategic Partnership Neighbourhood Management Team, and provides management support.

For completeness, this Service plan includes the Chief Executive's Personal Office functions and covers the support of overview and scrutiny provided by the Chief Scrutiny Officer. The Chief Executive is the principal advisor to members of the Council, and is the Head of Paid Service and the provider of overall direction and leadership for staff of the authority.

## 2.2 Key messages from 2008-09

The two primary areas that have impacted upon the work of the department and these relate to:

### The introduction of a new National Performance Framework

During April 2008 the Audit Commission undertook an independent assessment of the Council<sup>1</sup> to establish how well it engages with and provides leadership to the community, delivers community priorities in partnership with others, and ensures continuous improvement across the range of Council activities.

This assessment concluded that the Council was improving well and that it demonstrated a maximum 4 star rating for overall performance. The report concluded that

*'Halton Borough Council is performing strongly in tackling the borough's significant local challenges. Visionary leadership, strong partnership working and a track record of delivering major projects has led to good outcomes for local people'.*

As a result of this, and other inspection activity during the year, there are a number of areas that have been identified which have particular significance for the department and where the opportunities to gain further improvement exist i.e.

- Further improving performance management arrangements to ensure the delivery of key objectives of the Halton Strategic Partnership.
- Improving the consistency of the Council's scrutiny arrangements.
- Developing a more consistent approach to community engagement.

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<sup>1</sup> The Audit Commission Corporate Assessment Report can be found at <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/cpa/authority.asp?CategoryID=ENGLISH^576^LOCAL-VIEW^AUTHORITIES^111063>

These issues, which present an immediate priority for the department, will be taken forward through the development and implementation of Action Plans.

A number of changes have occurred during 2007 -08 that have a direct impact upon the work of the department and these largely relate to the introduction of a revised national performance framework, the principles of which were established within the 2006 Local Government white Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities'<sup>2</sup>.

This framework will see the existing Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) arrangements, which largely focus upon the work of individual Councils, being replaced by a Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), which will focus more upon the outcomes being delivered to communities by a range of local agencies working collectively and in partnership,

The implementation of this framework began with the introduction of a new nationally prescribed National Indicator Set (NIS) from the 01<sup>st</sup> April 2008, and the negotiation, between local agencies and central government, of a new Local Area Agreement (LAA) from June 2008.

In light of these arrangements there is a need for existing performance arrangements to be reviewed to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and that the Council works effectively with all local agencies and organisations through the Halton Strategic Partnership.

The new national indicator set will involve the use of the same information within a number of different forums and to avoid the risk of duplication and overlap there is a need to review existing arrangements for the collection, sharing and presentation of information in order that it can be collected once and used numerous times. As a result the department will give priority to a review of existing processes and software applications to ensure that the Council and its partners can maximise the potential of available resources and ensure that its performance management arrangements remain effective and efficient.

### Resilience

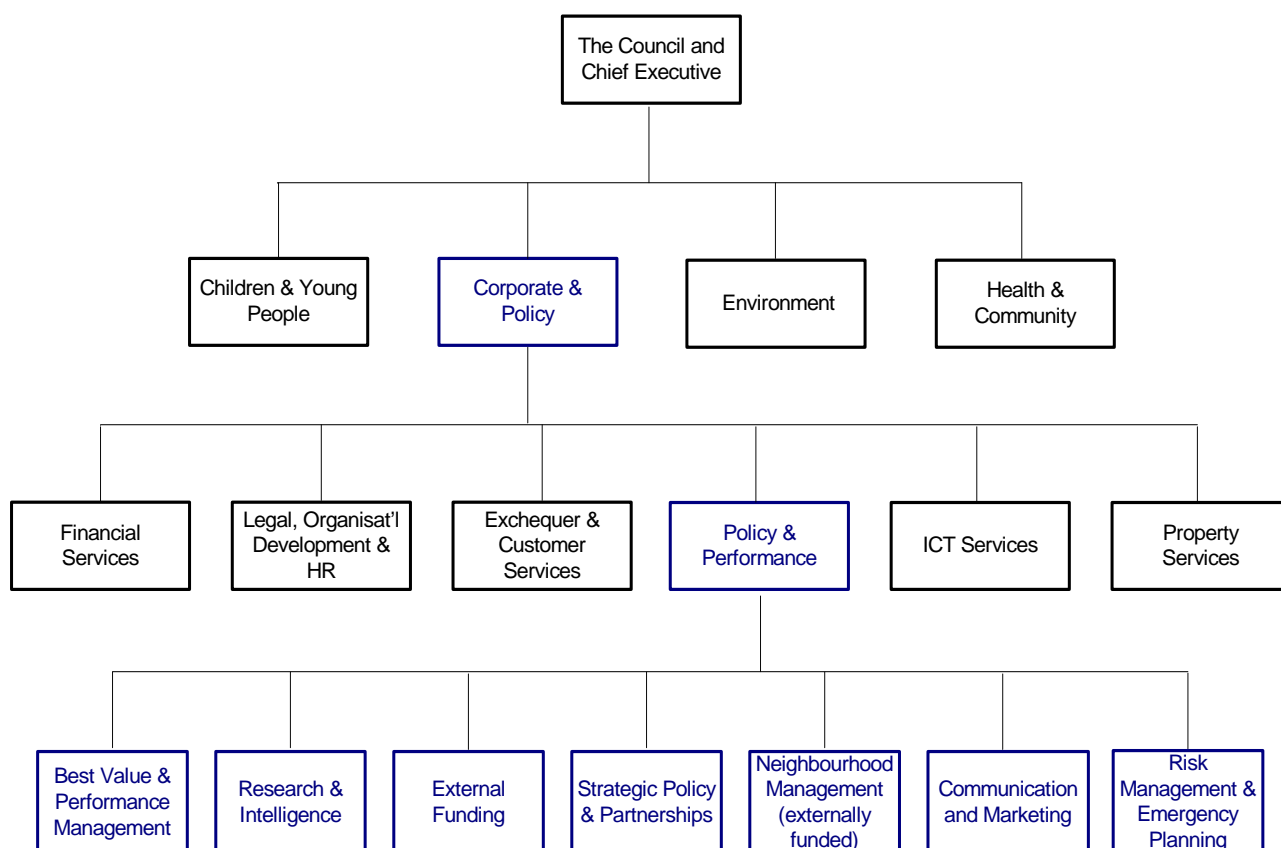
Events both in the UK and abroad have emphasised the importance of being prepared to respond to both natural calamities and terrorist threats.

Flooding within the UK prompted a review of our emergency plans and the undertaking of a flood risk assessment. Such reviews, assessments and exercises to test the robustness of arrangements will continue to be a priority for the department during the medium term.

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<sup>2</sup> White paper can be found at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/strongprosperous>

## 2.3 Organisational Structure



## 3.0 FACTORS AFFECTING THE SERVICE

### 3.1 External Factors

#### Political

The government is committed to providing local residents with greater opportunity to express their views on decisions affecting their area, and to be engaged in decisions about the design and delivery of local services. This means, for example, more information being available in an accessible form, more community engagement through mechanisms like participatory budgeting, and public involvement in scrutiny of public service provision.

The implications of this for the department are that we need to review our community engagement strategy, look at how we publish information about performance, and continue to develop area arrangements as a means of engaging with our more deprived communities.

Another strand of the government agenda signalled in the 2006 "Strong and Prosperous Communities" White paper is the devolution to regions and sub-regions.



This theme was developed in the Sub National Review of Economic Development and measures are included in the Local Democracy Bill etc. For Halton this means supporting the continuing development of governance arrangements for the Liverpool City Region, and engagement with the new regional processes.

## **Economic**

The current economic recession will have a considerable impact on the Council. Income will be reduced in some areas, and demand for some services will increase. Whilst this will not directly affect Policy and Performance, there will be indirect consequences through pressure on the Council's budgets.

The recession will affect our ability to achieve our objectives and targets for Halton, and the department will be providing policy advice to the Council and the strategic partnership on reviewing local and sub-regional targets, renegotiating the Local Area Agreement (LAA) at the annual refresh, and on possible policy responses to mitigate the effects of the recession on local businesses and residents.

Continued pressure on Council budgets will require sustained and systematic efforts to identify more efficient ways of working. An Efficiency Review has commenced with partners KPMG, and the department will be supporting this work through the project office, and where appropriate through support for service reviews. The Efficiency Review will have direct implications for the future role and structure of the department since much of our work falls under the heading of non-transactional support services (e.g. communications, policy, performance management) and will be subject to review.

A number of services benefit from time limited external funding such as Neighbourhood Management (Neighbourhood Element funding expires 2010) and the Halton Strategic Partnership (Working Neighbourhoods Fund is only committed up to 2011). As government prioritises investment in the economy, it is likely that these funding streams will be affected to some extent, and planning of exit strategies is essential.

## **Social**

One of Halton's major challenges is the gap that exists between the quality of life in different parts of the Borough. It is not yet clear how the economic recession will affect this pattern of inequality.

The department will continue to provide policy support to corporate and partnership work on reducing inequalities and improving community cohesion. Neighbourhood Management is a key tool in addressing these gaps.

## **Technological**

As more residents have access to and make use of the internet, the Council's web-site becomes an ever more important tool, not only for communication, but for the transaction of business with our customers. The software that supports the web-site is dated and needs replacing. The upgrade will allow the site to be better managed, and make it easier to keep the information it contains up to date. The department will be implementing these changes in conjunction with a council wide network of content providers.

Not all residents benefit from easy access to, or the skills to make use of, the internet and this brings with it exclusion, not just from Council services, but from other activities. A pilot project is being established in one of the neighbourhood management areas to establish ways in which such barriers to access can be overcome.

## **Legislative**

The government's commitment to increased participation is mentioned under "political factors" above. Recent and planned legislation include:

- Statutory guidance under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, including the "duty to involve".
- The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill published December 2008
- The Community Engagement Bill, planned for 2009/10

These pieces of legislation will affect the way that Council operates, and in response the department will :

- Support the review and development of Council and partnership engagement strategy.
- Publish information about services and performance in an accessible and understandable format.
- Gather customer intelligence through for example the use of surveys and focus groups,
- Support the review of Customer Focus by the Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board
- Continue to develop Neighbourhood management arrangements (subject to continued funding).

The government review of the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) is likely to lead to revised legislation and guidance in 2011. The results of this in terms of the work of the department, and the monitoring arrangements that will be necessary will become clearer as we move forward.

## **Environmental**

The Council joined the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme in the early part of 2007/08. The programme will guide the Council through a systematic analysis of its carbon footprint, outline opportunities to help manage carbon emissions, develop Action Plans for realising carbon and financial savings; and embed carbon management into the authority's day-to-day business.

As part of the programme the Council has developed a Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan to reduce energy bills and carbon emissions over the next five years. Through the Strategy and Implementation Plan, Council services will need to encourage closer examination of their policies around procurement, transport and the use of renewable energy.

Consideration will be given throughout the life of this Service Plan to ways in which support can be given to the action plan and to identify and implement opportunities to reduce any negative contribution to Climate Change and to promote best practice in the reduction of carbon emissions. The Policy and Performance Department's main use of energy is through its occupation of office space and use of transport. It will contribute to the programme by:

- Providing policy support to developing and performance managing the delivery of the Council's strategy
- Promoting carbon management to partners through for example its engagement within Local Strategic Partnership
- Making sure that the Community strategy is based on sustainable principles
- Including a target for CO<sub>2</sub> reduction in Halton in the Local Area Agreement
- Through working to continue to reduce the use of paper and energy. For example an electronic version of the staff magazine "InTouch" is to be introduced for those staff who have access to IT, so reducing printing and energy consumption
- Working with colleagues in other Council departments and particularly with residents in the Neighbourhood Management Areas to identify ways of increasing recycling.

## 3.2 Service Developments

There have been a number of reviews and examinations of departmental activity during the preceding 12 months. Such examinations and considerations have included service reviews, consultation and benchmarking exercises as illustrated below.

- a. The CPA Corporate Assessment which was undertaken by the Audit Commission in April 2008 that considered all aspects of the Councils work. The results of this review are referred to in more detail within section 2.2 of this plan.
- b. As a result of this assessment and other factors new procedures have been put in place in readiness for legislative changes and to strengthen the management and outcomes of the overview and scrutiny process, for example the development of a rolling work programme and recommendation follow through.
- c. The review of Performance Management arrangements by the Corporate Services Policy & Performance Board resulted in recommendations being approved by Executive Board in November 2008. The proposed changes will help to address some of the findings of the Corporate Assessment and will simplify arrangements between the Council, the LSP and our partners. Policy and Performance will be responsible for making this happen, and working arrangements will be changed to integrate partnership and Council arrangements, and introduce more flexible software.
- d. A review by the Corporate Service Policy and Performance Board of the handling of customer and resident complaints was completed. Recommendations for changes to the Corporate Complaints system, which is administered by this department, about wider complaint handling and about customer care within the Council were approved by Executive Board in order to improve satisfaction with the way complaints are handled. A further piece of work is now underway to develop a customer service strategy and to use the government customer excellence standard as a benchmark against which to measure current practice.
- e. The annual Audit Commission review of the Council's arrangements for securing data quality concluded that throughout the Council there was a commitment to maintaining and improving the quality of data and that all performance indicators selected for sampling were fairly stated and accurate. The Commission also made a number of recommendations as to how further improvement could be achieved and these have now been integrated into an existing work plan the delivery of which will ensure the Council has in place an organisational framework, and effective processes to further secure the quality of its data.

- f. A review of Neighbourhood Management arrangements was conducted in 2008 by a Government funded Neighbourhood Renewal Advisor. The findings were considered by the Neighbourhood Management Board in July 2008 and an action plan was agreed, part of which is to develop a business case for the continuation of Neighbourhood Management arrangements after the current funding expires.

Consultation and engagement activities have included:

- a. The Places Survey, which was conducted at the end of 2008. This is a perception survey conducted by all local authorities to a nationally prescribed format. It replaces the old Best Value Satisfaction Survey. There are many similarities, but the Places Survey covers other public services in Halton, and will feed into the National Indicator set.
- b. A number of events took place in the Neighbourhood Management areas to engage residents in Neighbourhood Management activities, for example through clean up days. Over 200 residents have expressed interest in being involved in Neighbourhood Management Boards or acting in some other capacity.
- c. A number of surveys of our Halton 2000 Residents Panel have been conducted.

During 2007/08 the regular benchmarking took place against national performance indicators, the national Best Value User Survey and Audit Commission profiles. In addition,

- a. The Council joined the PWC benchmarking club for unitary and metropolitan authorities. Presentations on comparative performance were made to both Management Team and the Executive Board. Performance on the last year of Best Value Performance Indicators showed a good rate of improvement, and overall high performance compared to other unitary authorities, but a number of areas for improvement were identified. Club membership allows the Council to have a better understanding of its relative performance and to identify any specific areas where performance opportunities exist.
- b. A customer service strategy has been developed following the benchmarking of best practice and a visit to a comparable authority.
- c. The Halton Data Observatory has provided benchmarking nationally and locally against a variety of strategic and operational performance data. This allows the Council and other partner agencies to track present levels of progress and to map inequalities as a basis for future strategy and policy development
- d. The department took part in the KPMG review which benchmarked the Council as a whole against other authorities on cost and staffing. This has provided important baseline information in preparation for the forthcoming Council wide efficiency review.

### **3.3 Efficiency Improvements**

During 2008 - 09 the department made a number of efficiency savings primarily through its procurement arrangements, such as the review and renewal of the contract for the Council's staff newsletter, Inside Halton, and changes to advertising arrangements. Further evaluations of the way in which the Council procures its design and printing services, and the advertising of employment vacancies will be undertaken during the current financial year.

Savings have also been made through a review and revision of staffing arrangements within the department and such arrangements will be subject to further review as we progress through the year.

The work of the department will also be considered as part of the review of non-transactional support services as well as the organisational review of current management structures and administrative support arrangements.

### **3.4 National Regional and Sub-regional Focus**

The changes in national policy affecting the service have been referred to elsewhere - the emphasis on localities through the LSP and LAA; the new performance framework; and the duty to involve have had direct implications for policy and partnership working. As mentioned above, a review of performance management has sought to reduce duplication across the Council and partnership systems and introduce more consistency.

The sub-national review of economic development has emphasised the importance of the city region, and the external funding division has co-ordinated the Council's response through the Halton in the Region members and officers groups. The development of the Liverpool City Region MAA (Multi Area Agreement) has required sub-regional co-ordination, and it is important that it is consistent with our own LAA. The implications for the Policy and Performance department are that we need to develop closer working between sub-regional and local policy development and performance management.

Whilst Halton is statutorily part of the Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Local Resilience Forum (LRF) for emergency planning purposes, greater involvement and co-operation took place with the Merseyside LRF in 2008 to build cross-border resilience. This included the Chief Executive and Leader attending a joint training event with their opposite numbers in Merseyside. This co-operation will continue through the service plan period.

A further change in the region has been the re-organisation of Local Government in Cheshire. An immediate consequence of this is that the Emergency Planning consortium which Halton B.C. manages on behalf of the 6 Cheshire Districts will cease 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009. Although this will free up some management time it will be more than offset by the loss of additional capacity the extra staff provided.

### **3.5 Equality and Diversity**

Halton Council is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity within all aspects of its service delivery, policy development and as an employer. This commitment is reflected in a range of policies, strategies and framework documents that underpin the work of the Council in its day-to-day operation and in the services that it delivers.

This commitment is encapsulated in the equal opportunities policy that the Council has adopted. The policy sets out the Council's approach to promoting equal opportunities; valuing diversity and encouraging fairness and justice; and providing equal chances for everyone in Halton to work, learn and live free from discrimination and victimisation. The Council will combat discrimination throughout the organisation and will use its position of influence in the Borough, wherever possible, to help to identify and overcome discriminatory barriers that may exist.

Each year Departments undertake Equality Impact Assessments to examine the equality implications of all of their policies, procedures and practices. As a result an Equality Action Plan is developed to identify those issues that demand attention. This forms a contribution to the overall Corporate Equalities Plan.

As a result of such assessments any high priority actions that have been identified, that fall within the life of this plan, are detailed in section 5.

The department has provided policy support to the development of corporate policies and procedures, and has supported the development of a partnership equalities group to ensure that a consistent approach is taken by our partners. This remit has now extended to community cohesion, and some specific work has taken place with Riverside College and Council services to assist the integration of Libyan students.

### **3.6 Risk Management**

Risk Management, which forms a key element of the strategic management and performance management processes of the Council, is a business discipline that is used to effectively manage potential opportunities and threats to the organisation in achieving its objectives.

Risk assessments are the process by which departments identify those issues that are, or may be, likely to impede the delivery of service objectives. Such risks are categorised and rated in terms of both their probability, i.e. the extent to which they are likely to happen, and their severity i.e. the potential extent of their impact should they occur.

Against each key objective the overall initial and residual risk assessment (before and after the risk control measures have been identified) is shown.

The risk mapping exercise scores the potential impact on the key objective (severity) and the likelihood (probability) of the risks happening to arrive at a number. Such numbers are then translated into a Low, Medium or High category.

Risk Score	Overall Level of Risk
1 – 4	LOW
5 – 10	MEDIUM
11 – 16	HIGH

Following such assessments a series of risk treatment measures are identified that will mitigate against such risks having an adverse impact upon the delivery of the departmental objectives.

Mitigation measures for those risks that were initially assessed as high have been included as an Appendix within this plan. As such their implementation will be monitored through the Quarterly Departmental Service Plan Monitoring Report process.

### 3.7 Unforeseen Developments

Whilst every effort has been made to identify those significant developments that may influence or impact upon the service during the life of this plan the possibility exists that unforeseen developments may occur that need to be considered as and when they arise. Such developments will be detailed and commented upon as appropriate in the sections dealing with key developments or emerging issues within the relevant Service Plan Quarterly Monitoring Reports.

In addition to the normal reporting cycle the service may also report ‘by exception’ to the appropriate Policy and Performance Board when unforeseen developments occur.

Where a more immediate decision is required due to the pressing nature of any unforeseen development, this will be referred to Management Team and the Executive Board for attention. The respective Policy and Performance Boards will be kept informed of any developments of this nature.

All reports to the Policy and Performance Boards, with the exception of Part II items, are publicly available documents and can be accessed through the Council’s website at <http://www2.halton.gov.uk/>



## 4.0 Resources

### 4.1 Budget Summary and Service Costs

### 4.2 Human Resource Requirements

The following table details the departmental staffing levels for the period 2008 to 2012

<b>Staffing levels</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>
Operational Director	1	1	1	1
Chief Executives Personal Office	3	3	3	3
Best Value & Performance Management	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.6
Communications & Marketing	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5
Research & Intelligence	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5
Risk Management & Emergency Planning	10 <sup>3</sup>	7	7	7
Strategic Policy & Partnerships	7.3	6.5	6.5	6.5
External Funding <sup>4</sup>	13	13	13	13
Neighbourhood Management <sup>5</sup>	5	5	5	5
Chief Scrutiny Advisor <sup>6</sup>	1	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>62.9</b>	<b>59.1</b>	<b>59.1</b>	<b>59.1</b>

At the time of writing there are no indications that the human resource requirements of the Department will be subject to any significant change during the plan period to 2012. This will of course be subject to the Efficiency Review.

<sup>3</sup> Includes 3 posts that are hosted on behalf of Cheshire Consortium ending 31 March 2009

<sup>4</sup> Includes 2 vacant posts that will not be filled unless sustainable external funding can be generated to substitute for ERDF and SRB administration fees.

<sup>5</sup> The neighbourhood management team is externally funded by LAA Grant Neighbourhood Element up to March 2010, and are on fixed term contracts related to the duration of the grant. Continuation for 20010-12 is subject to identification of further funding.

<sup>6</sup> The Chief Scrutiny Advisor forms part of the Director of Corporate and Policy's office

### **4.3 ICT Requirements**

A review of performance management arrangements in 2008 highlighted the need for improved software. Procurement of a suitable software solution will take place in 2008/09 for implementation in 2009/10

The software that manages the content of the Council's website is no longer supported by the supplier because of its age. An upgrade is to be implemented which will make it easier for content managers to keep the site up to date, and will provide a greater degree of management control over the process.

### **4.4 Accommodation and Property Requirements**

It is not anticipated at the time of writing the plan that the accommodation needs of the department will change over the medium term.

## 5.0 Service Performance

As detailed in the introduction to this plan, the primary purpose of the Service Plan is to provide a clear statement on what individual services are planning to achieve and to show how this contributes towards achieving the corporate priorities of the Council and / or its statutory responsibilities. The service utilises a variety of measures and targets to enable performance against the service plan to be tracked, monitored, and reported. Details of these measures and targets are given below.

### ***Objectives and Key Milestones.***

These show the major events in the work of the Department that are planned to take place during 2009–12, such as the launch of new initiatives progress on major projects or the delivery of business critical activity. Objectives and Milestones are clearly linked to the appropriate Key Areas of Focus in the Corporate Plan 2006-11.

### ***National Performance Indicators.***

This is a national set of 198 indicators that have been prescribed by Central Government that are intended to measure the extent to which authorities are operating effectively and efficiently and are delivering upon both national and local priorities.

### ***Local Performance Indicators.***

These are indicators that have been developed by the Council and any relevant non-statutory indicators that have been adopted from national or other sources.

### ***Local Area Agreement Targets.***

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three-year agreement based on Halton's Community Strategy. The second round LAA commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008, and included within it are improvement targets for the Borough of Halton to which both the Council and its partners will contribute.

The LAA contains 86 key targets addressing all of the priority issues identified in both the Community Strategy, and the Council's Corporate Plan. Of the 86 key targets, 34 are mandatory and also included are the 12 LPSA targets to which the Council signed up.

Many of the objectives contained within the current service plans are designed to support the achievement of LAA targets. A full version of Halton's LAA can be viewed on the Halton Strategic Partnership Website at [http://www.haltonpartnership.net/site/images/stories//laa\\_final\\_\(march\\_2007\).pdf](http://www.haltonpartnership.net/site/images/stories//laa_final_(march_2007).pdf)

## 5.1 Service Objectives –

(NB Other than by exception those service objectives and/or Key Milestones shown in *italics* will only be reported at Quarter 2 (half-year) and Quarter 4 (year-end.)

<b>Corporate Priority 6</b>	<b>Corporate Effectiveness and Efficient Service Delivery</b>
<i>Key Area of Focus: 31</i>	<i>Working with partners and the community to ensure that our priorities, objectives and targets are evidence based, regularly monitored and reviewed and that there are plausible delivery plans to improve the quality of life in Halton and to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the rest of Halton.</i>
<b>Service Objective: PPO1</b>	Improve the effectiveness of the support intelligence and advice provided by the Council and Its partners to review policy, resource planning service delivery and performance.
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor performance against Community Strategy targets and review delivery plans <b>June 2009</b><sup>1</sup>.</li> <li>• Monitor and review progress in delivering Local Area Agreement targets with partners and agree refresh with government office <b>March 2010</b><sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Review Halton Data Observatory and partnership data arrangements, and upgrade <b>March 2010</b><sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Complete mid-term review of Sustainable Community Strategy and adopt <b>June 2009</b><sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Complete mid-term review of Corporate Plan and adopt <b>December 2009</b><sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Complete design of and undertake survey of Consulting Halton Communities - <b>November 2009</b></li> <li>• Analyse, evaluate and disseminate results to relevant audiences - <b>March 2010</b>.</li> </ul>
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor performance against Community Strategy targets and review delivery plans <b>June 2010</b><sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Monitor and review progress in delivering Local Area Agreement targets with partners and agree refresh with government office <b>March 2011</b><sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Following consultation and engagement, adopt new Sustainable Community strategy and new Corporate plan for the period April 2011 on wards. <b>March 2011</b><sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Negotiate new Local Area Agreement 2011-2014 <b>March 2011</b><sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Agree local questions for Places Survey 2010 and commission it <b>September 2010</b><sup>1</sup></li> <li>• HSPB to agree exit strategy for end of WNF funding. <b>Sept 2010</b><sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Complete design of and undertake Place Surveys - <b>December 2010</b></li> <li>• Analyse, evaluate and disseminate results to relevant audiences - <b>March 2010</b></li> </ul>

<b>Corporate Priority 6</b>	<b>Corporate Effectiveness and Efficient Service Delivery</b>
<i>Key Area of Focus: 31</i>	<i>Working with partners and the community to ensure that our priorities, objectives and targets are evidence based, regularly monitored and reviewed and that there are plausible delivery plans to improve the quality of life in Halton and to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the rest of Halton.</i>

<b>Service Objective: PP01 cont'd</b>	Improve the effectiveness of the support, intelligence and advice provided by the Council and its partners to review policy, resource planning, service delivery and performance.				
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor performance against Community Strategy targets and review delivery plans <b>June 2011</b><sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Monitor and review progress in delivering Local Area Agreement targets with partners <b>March 2012</b><sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Complete design of and undertake survey of Consulting Halton Communities - <b>November 2011</b></li> <li>• Analyse, evaluate and disseminate results to relevant audiences - <b>March 2012</b>.</li> </ul>				
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Initial		<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Operational Director <sup>1</sup> / Head of Research & Intelligence	<b>Linked Indicators</b>
	Residual				

<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	<b>Corporate Effectiveness and Efficient Service Delivery</b>
<i>Key Area of Focus: 32</i>	<i>Building on our customer focus by improving communication, involving more service users in the design and delivery of services and ensuring equality of access.</i>

<b>Service Objective: PPO2</b>	Improve the quality and effectiveness of the Council's external communications					
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement new website content management system and migrate content <b>May 2009</b></li> <li>• Review key messages <b>April 2009</b></li> <li>• Carry out internal communications survey <b>April 2009</b></li> <li>• Update Communications Guide; Media Guide; Style Guidelines <b>October 2009</b></li> <li>• Evaluate Advertising contract <b>September 2009</b></li> <li>• Review arrangements for communicating in a crisis <b>June 2009</b></li> </ul>					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review new arrangements for design and print procurement <b>September 2010</b></li> <li>• Update communications strategy and supporting action plans</li> <li>• Review InTouch contract with option to extend <b>December 2010</b></li> <li>• Review Inside Halton contract <b>December 2010</b></li> <li>• Issue new A-Z guide to services <b>August 2010</b></li> </ul>					
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retender InTouch contract <b>December 2011</b></li> </ul>					
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Initial		<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Communications Manager	<b>Linked Indicators</b>	
	Residual					

<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	<b>Corporate Effectiveness and Efficient Service Delivery</b>
<i>Key Area of Focus: 32</i>	<i>Building on our customer focus by improving communication, involving more service users in the design and delivery of services and ensuring equality of access.</i>

<b>Service Objective: PPO3</b>	Address inequalities and improve opportunities by narrowing the gap between the most deprived wards in the borough and the rest through the delivery of Neighbourhood Management Arrangements.					
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce NM update quarterly.</li> <li>• Complete residents Survey and undertake analysis – February 2010.</li> <li>• Complete and submit Business Case for NM funding beyond April 2010 – September 2009</li> </ul>					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	• Not applicable <sup>7</sup>					
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	• Not applicable					
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Initial	Low	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Director of Neighbourhood Management	<b>Linked Indicators</b>	
	Residual	Low				

<sup>7</sup> Future milestones beyond April 2010 can only be determined once future funding arrangements have been finalised.

<b>Corporate Priority: 6</b>	<b>Corporate Effectiveness and Efficient Service Delivery</b>
<i>Key Area of Focus: 33</i>	<i>Ensuring that we are properly structured organised and fit for purpose and that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advice and information.</i>

<b>Service Objective: PP04</b>	To ensure that the organisation remains fit for purpose through the ongoing development of Business Continuity, Risk Management, and Health and Safety arrangements.					
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement existing Action Plan and further review arrangements for business continuity in Directorates - <b>December 2009</b>.</li> <li>• Review the embeddedness of strategic risk management arrangements - <b>December 2009</b></li> <li>• Corporate Risk Group to Review Corporate &amp; Directorate Risk Registers, provide appropriate performance monitoring reports and deliver manager and member training by <b>December 2009</b>.</li> <li>• Secure external accreditation for Health &amp; Safety - <b>March 2010</b>.</li> <li>• Review the Council's preparedness for pandemic flu and have appropriate plans in place - <b>March 2010</b></li> </ul>					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued reviews of the provision of these services against any proposed changes in Council structures and government guidance</li> </ul>					
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not applicable</li> </ul>					
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Initial	Medium	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Head of Risk Management	<b>Linked Indicators</b>	
	Residual	Medium				



<b>Corporate Priority: 6</b>	<b>Corporate Effectiveness and Efficient Service Delivery</b>
<i>Key Area of Focus: 33</i>	<i>Ensuring that we are properly structured organised and fit for purpose and that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advice and information.</i>

<b>Service Objective: PP05</b>	Improve the effectiveness of the overview and scrutiny framework for the Council to deliver efficient, effective and high quality services through a programme of continuous improvement.					
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a functioning overview and scrutiny gateway and web area - <b>July 2009</b>.</li> <li>• Integrate relevant legislation and guidance into Halton's overview and scrutiny framework - <b>October 2008</b>.</li> <li>• Agree 2009 – 10 Policy &amp; Performance Board Work Programmes - <b>June 2009</b>.</li> </ul>					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review overview and scrutiny arrangements and where appropriate make recommendations for improvement - <b>October 2010</b>.</li> <li>• Agree 2010 – 11 Policy &amp; Performance Board Work Programmes - <b>June 2010</b></li> </ul>					
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out assessment of O &amp; S impact on decision making processes - <b>November 2011</b>.</li> <li>• Agree 2011 – 12 Policy &amp; Performance Board Work Programmes - <b>June 2011</b></li> </ul>					
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Initial		<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Head of Overview and Scrutiny	<b>Linked Indicators</b>	
	Residual					

## 6.2 Performance Indicators and Targets (Statutory & Local Indicators):

Ref <sup>8</sup>	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007/08 Actual	2007/08 Quartiles <sup>9</sup> (All England)			Halton 2008/9 Target	Halton 2008/9 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			09/10	10/11	11/12

### Corporate Health

NI 1	% Of people who believe that people from different backgrounds get on well together	CP 6 AOF 32	77 BVUS <sup>10</sup>	84 BVUS	80 BVUS	76 BVUS		TBA (Places Survey)	N/A No survey	TBA	N/A No survey
NI 2	% Of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood.	CP 6 AOF 32	N/A					TBA (Places Survey)	“ “ “	“ “ “	“ “ “
NI 4	% Of people who feel that they can influence decisions in their locality.	CP 6 AOF 32	34 BVUS	29 BVUS	26 BVUS	23 BVUS		TBA (Places Survey)	“ “ “	“ “ “	“ “ “
NI 5	Overall / general satisfaction with local area.	CP 6 AOF 32	66 BVUS	82 BVUS	76 BVUS	69 BVUS		TBA (Places Survey)	“ “ “	“ “ “	“ “ “
NI 37	Awareness of civil protection arrangements in the local area	CP 6 AOF 33	New PI for 2008					TBA (Places Survey)	“ “ “	“ “ “	“ “ “
<b><u>PPLI 1</u></b>	% Of LAA WNF Spend (%)	CP6 AOF 34	100				100		100	100	100
PPLI 2	% Of neighbourhood element funding committed / spent	“ “ “	100				100	TBA	100	100	100
PPLI 3	% Of Departments with up to date Business Continuity Plans	CP 6 AOF 33	100				100	TBA	100	100	100

<sup>8</sup> Key Indicators are identified by an **underlined reference in bold type**.

<sup>9</sup> No quartile data is available for local performance indicators

<sup>10</sup> BVUS = 2006 Best Value user Survey

Ref	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007 /08 Actual	2007/08 Quartiles (All England)			Halton 2008/9 Target	Halton 2008/09 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			09/10	10/11	11/12

**Corporate Health cont'd**

<b><u>PPLI 4</u></b>	% Of Departments with up to date Risk Registers	CP 6 AOF 33	100				100	TBA	100	100	
PPLI 5	Number of accidents resulting in injuries to staff	CP 6 AOF 40	38				50	TBA	45	41	35
PPLI 6	% Of employees attending emergency planning training exercises.	“ “ “	100				100	TBA	100	100	
PPLI 7	% Of invoices paid within 30 days	CP 6 AOF 33	93				94	TBA	95	96	97
PPLI 8	Number of Team Brief feedback forms returned – average per month		12				15	TBA	25	35	50

**Cost and Efficiency**

<b><u>PPLI 9</u></b>	% Of departmental working days lost due to sickness absence.	CP 6 AOF 40	4.5				4.0	TBA	4.0	3.8	3.5
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Ref <sup>11</sup>	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007/08 Actual	2007/08 Quartiles <sup>12</sup> (All England)			Halton 2008/9 Target	Halton 2007/8 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			09/10	10/11	11/12

### Fair Access

PPLI 10	The duty to report Race Equality (Does the authority have a Race Equality scheme in place (%))	CP 6 AOF 32	84	84	79	63	84				
NI 140	Fair treatment by local services	“ “ “	N/A				N/A	TBA (Places Survey)	N/A No survey		N/A No survey

### Quality

PPLI 11	Overall satisfaction with the communications of the Council (%)	CP 6 AOF 32	48 (2006)				N/A	TBA	N/A No survey	55	N/A No survey
PPLI 12	Satisfaction with internal communications of the Council (%)	“ “ “	71.9				75	TBA	78	78	80
PPLI 13	% of people satisfied or more than satisfied with visit to Council website <a href="http://www.halton.gov.uk">www.halton.gov.uk</a>		82				85	TBA	90	93	95
PPLI 14	Satisfaction with InTouch magazine		81.6				85	TBA	87	90	90
PPLI 15	Satisfaction with Inside Halton magazine		New for 2009				N/A	TBA	80	85	85

<sup>11</sup> Key Indicators are identified by an **underlined reference in bold type**.

<sup>12</sup> No quartile data is available for local performance indicators

Ref <sup>13</sup>	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007/8 Actual	2007/08 Quartiles <sup>14</sup> (All England)			Halton 2008/9 Target	Halton 2008/9 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			09/10	10/11	

### Quality cont'd

PPLI 16	% of residents in Halton's NM pilot areas reporting an increase in satisfaction with their neighbourhoods.	" " "	47 Telephone survey				N/A Survey undertaken every 2 years		50	N/A Survey undertaken every 2 years	N/A
PPLI 17	% of NM pilot area residents who feel that they can influence decisions affecting their local area	" " "	32.9 Telephone Survey				N/A Survey undertaken every 2 years		40	N/A Survey undertaken every 2 years	
PPLI 18	% of residents in NM pilot areas engaged in Neighbourhood Partnership activity.	" " "	New for 07/ 08				Baseline established		Baseline +10%		N/A

### Service Delivery

PPLI 19	Value of external funding bids supported (£000's)	CP 6 AOF 34	1722				1000	TBA	1000	1000	1000
PPLI 20	% of milestones and objectives within annual Neighbourhood Management Action Plan achieved.	" " "	76				80		85	N/A	N/A

<sup>13</sup> Key Indicators are identified by an **underlined reference in bold type**.

<sup>14</sup> No quartile data is available for local performance indicators



### 5.3 Data Quality

Good quality data provides the foundation for managing and improving services, determining and acting upon shared priorities, and accounting for performance to inspecting bodies and the local community.

In recognising this, the Council has developed a Corporate Data Quality Strategy that will provide a mechanism by which the authority can be assured that the quality of its data remains robust and fit for purpose. This strategy, which will remain subject to periodic review, establishes the key dimensions of good quality data and identifies five Key Corporate Objectives namely;

#### Objective 1

To provide assurance to all stakeholders that the quality of data used in decision making and in accounting for and reporting the performance of the authority, either directly or through partnership arrangements, is wholly fit for purpose.

#### Objective 2

That, through a rigorous process of monitoring, review and refinement, the authority's arrangements for securing data quality remain relevant, reliable and robust and that exemplary arrangements for securing data quality are achieved within the medium term

#### Objective 3

That arrangements for securing data quality are widely shared, communicated and understood by all of those with data quality responsibility and that relevant staff are provided with timely and appropriate guidance and support.

#### Objective 4

That all departments, partners and agencies that deliver services on behalf of the Council use complete, accurate and verifiable data which is collected and communicated in an effective and timely manner.

#### Objective 5

That all data used in the calculation of nationally prescribed performance indicators is definition compliant and verifiable and that no such indicators will be amended or qualified as a result of work undertaken by inspecting bodies.

In supporting the delivery of the corporate strategy the department will ensure that appropriate systems and processes are in place to secure the quality of its data and that such systems are subject to periodic and risk based review. In so doing the department will pay particular attention to the six key dimensions of good quality data i.e. that data is

- **Accurate** For its intended purpose;
- **Valid** By being consistently recorded and used in compliance with predetermined definitions and rules;
- **Reliable** By reflecting stable and consistent data collection processes;
- **Timely** By being made available as soon as possible after the activity or event and in line with organisational requirements;
- **Relevant** For the purpose intended;
- **Complete** In that the monitoring of incomplete, missing or invalid data is avoided.

In supporting the delivery of the Council's data quality arrangements the department has taken a lead role in establishing the Council's Data Quality Lead Officer Group. This group, which has representation from each of the Council's Directorates, supports the Council's Data Quality Primary Officer (Strategic Director, Corporate & Policy) in the delivery and implementation of agreed actions to further secure and improve the Council's data quality management arrangements.

Additionally the department has established a system whereby responsibility for the calculation national performance indicators is attributable to named officers and can be validated. It has been necessary to refine these arrangements in light of the introduction of the new performance framework and further work will be undertaken during 2009 – 10 to extend this assurance beyond the nationally reported indicator set.



## 6.0 Performance Reporting

As detailed in the introduction to this plan, the primary purpose of the Service Plan is to provide a clear statement on what individual services are planning to achieve and to show how this contributes towards achieving the corporate priorities of the Council and or delivering it's statutory responsibilities.

It is imperative that the Council and interested members of the public can keep track of how the Council and its Departments are progressing against objectives and targets, and that mechanisms are in place to enable councillors and managers to see whether the service is performing as planned.

As a result Departmental progress will be monitored through:

- **The day to day monitoring by Strategic Directors through their regular interaction with Operational Directors;**
- **Provision of Quarterly progress reports to Corporate and Directorate Management Teams;**
- **The inclusion of Quarterly Service Plan Monitoring reports as a standard item on the agenda of all the Council's Policy and Performance Boards.**
- **Publication of Quarterly Service Plan monitoring reports on the Councils intranet site.**

In demonstrating it's commitment to exploiting the potential of Information and Communications Technology to improve the accessibility of its services and related information an extensive range of documentation, including this plan and it's associated quarterly monitoring reports, are available via the Council's website at

<http://www2.halton.gov.uk/content/councilanddemocracy/council/plansandstrategies>

Additionally information and assistance can be accessed through any of the Council's Halton Direct Link facilities (HDL) or the Council's libraries.

## 7.0 Statutory and Non-statutory Plans



**Halton Corporate Plan (2006 – 2011) – Council Priorities and Key Areas of Focus.**

**A Healthy Halton**

<b>1</b>	Improving the future health prospects of Halton residents, particularly children, through the encouragement of an improved dietary intake and the availability of nutritionally balanced meals within schools and other Council establishments.
<b>2</b>	Improving the future health prospects of Halton residents through encouraging and providing the opportunities to access and participate in physically active lifestyles.
<b>3</b>	Delivering programmes of education to improve the health of Halton residents.
<b>4</b>	Helping people to manage the effects of ill health, disability and disadvantage.
<b>5</b>	Actively managing the environmental factors that are detrimental to good health.
<b>6</b>	Providing services and facilities to maintain the independence and well-being of vulnerable people within our community.
<b>7</b>	Providing services and facilities to maintain existing good health and well-being.

**Halton's Urban Renewal**

<b>8</b>	Exploiting the benefits of inward investment opportunities by creating a physical environment that is both attractive and responsive to the needs of existing and potential business.
<b>9</b>	Maintaining and developing local transport networks that meet the needs of resident's, businesses and visitors to Halton.
<b>10</b>	Revitalising the economy by sustaining and developing an environment that compliments the core brand values of existing and potential investors.
<b>11</b>	Maintaining levels of affordable housing provision within Halton that provides for quality and choice and meets the needs and aspirations of existing and potential residents.
<b>12</b>	Providing opportunities for recreation and fostering conservation by developing attractive and accessible parks and open spaces.



## Children & Young People in Halton

13	Improving the educational attainment of pupils in Halton, by providing effective teaching and school support
14	To improve outcomes for looked after children by increasing educational attainment, health, stability and support during transition to adulthood.
15	To deliver effective services to children and families by making best use of available resources
16	To provide transport facilities that meets the needs of children & young people in Halton accessing education and training.
17	Provide an effective transition for young people from school to employment, through opportunities for work related learning, and post 16 education, voluntary and community work.
18	To reduce the conception rate amongst women under 18 by providing awareness, education and relevant support
19	To ensure a safe environment for children where they are supported and protected from abuse and neglect

## Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

20	To increase self-confidence and social inclusion by providing opportunities to adults to engage in basic skills learning.
21	To improve access to employment by providing opportunities to enhance employability skills and knowledge
22	Working with employers to identify and secure opportunities for the unemployed.
23	To provide transport facilities that meets the needs of those people in Halton accessing employment and training.
24	To sustain current employment levels by providing practical and financial advice and assistance to those from disadvantaged groups
25	To increase employment opportunities and business start ups in Halton, by developing an enterprise culture



## A Safer Halton

26	Actively encouraging socially responsible behaviour by engaging with Halton's young people and by providing opportunities for them to access and take part in affordable leisure time activities.
27	Reducing the physical effects of anti-social and criminal behaviour
28	Providing and maintaining a highways and footpath network that is safe, accessible, and meets the needs and expectations of those living, working or visiting in Halton.
29	Improving the quality of community life by enhancing the visual amenity of Halton's neighbourhoods.
30	Improving the social and physical well-being of those groups most at risk within the community

## Corporate Effectiveness & Efficient Service Delivery

31	Working with partners and the community, to ensure that our priorities, objectives, and targets are evidence based, regularly monitored and reviewed, and that there are plausible delivery plans to improve the quality of life in Halton, and to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the rest of Halton.
32	Building on our customer focus by improving communication, involving more service users in the design and delivery of services, and ensuring equality of access.
33	Ensuring that we are properly structured organised and fit for purpose and that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advice and information.
34	Attracting and managing financial resources effectively and maintaining transparency, financial probity and prudence and accountability to our stakeholders
35	Implementing and further developing procurement arrangements that will reduce the cost to the Council of acquiring its goods and services.
36	Ensuring that the Council's land and property portfolio is managed efficiently
37	Ensuring that Council buildings are safe and accessible, meet the needs of service users and the organisation, and comply with legislative requirements
38	Exploiting the potential of ICT to meet the present and future business requirements of the Council, and ensure that customer access is improved by means of electronic service delivery.
39	Ensuring that human resources are managed and deployed to their best effect and improving the relevance, availability and use of HR information
40	Ensuring that the Council has the right people with the right skills and who are informed and motivated and provided with opportunities for personal development and engagement.